Ticks
A number of chicks were infested with ticks within a week of hatching and later some deformation of feet was observed. Tick infestation was lower in 1984 than in previous years and only a small proportion of the population was affected.

Conservation and management
It seems certain that the Aride population of Roseate Terns has increased from 1978 to 1984, and as long as the future of the island reserve remains secure, the outlook is favourable. Annual monitoring is extremely important for this species, as numbers and breeding success vary considerably from year to year. The birds are renowned for their sensitivity, and have been known to desert eggs and chicks for no apparent reason. It is vital that disturbance is kept to a minimum.

The most suitable habitat for the species appears to be mature woodland, the shade afforded compensates for deaths caused by *Pisonia* fruit entanglement or hanging. This also will vary from year to year, so further study is needed. Pineapples, which at one time threatened to take over nest sites, are now being shaded out by woodland, so this is no longer a danger to the habitat. The accidental import of rats must at all costs be prevented, and all incoming goods carefully scrutinized. Disturbance by low-flying aircraft is rare.

No quantitative observations have been made, neither have any ringing operations been carried out, and it is doubtful whether the disturbance involved is merited.

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Susan M. Tyzack and *O. Volcere, Aride Island, via Praslin, Seychelles*

Scopus 10: 45-47, June 1986 Received 4 February 1986

NOTES ON THE SPECKLED PIGEON *COLUMBA GUINEA* IN NW SOMALIA

Ash & Miskell (1983) have drawn attention to the recent spread of the Speckled Pigeon *Columba guinea* in Somalia, and the purpose of this note is to record its status in NW Somalia in 1958, and attempt to explain various flock movements which were noted.

Distribution
By 1958 this bird was quite common in the townships as far east as Sheikh and Burao, breeding freely in unused house chimney pots in Hargeisa during April, October and November (i.e. during the rains); Archer & Godman (1937) describe the bird as being "confined to one area, Gebileh - El Birdaleh - Birdah - Buramo (= Borama) on the Somali-Abyssinian border". They also remark that at Gebileh it

inhabited the sandstone cliffs of the *tugs* (= wadis), feeding out in the nearby *jowari* (millet) fields during the day and returning to drink in the *tug* pools at 15:30. Elsewhere this bird is well-known as a commensal of man, almost domesticated in its use of man's buildings (Britton 1980, Goodwin 1967); and it has also acquired this trait in Somalia, enabling it to exploit an otherwise unused niche aided by a new food supply, and so expand its range.

Local movements/Roosting
Two types of local movement were recognized at Hargeisa, the first of which was ascribed to a winter feeding movement in which the birds were noted flying eastwards to Hargeisa at about 16:00, and continuing for about an hour. They flew at tree-top height, fast, direct and close to the *tug*, with small flocks of about a dozen birds passing every few minutes, increasing to flocks of 25-30 birds in February. This movement continued until 12 April at least. It is suggested that these birds had spent the day feeding in the grain-fields to the west of Hargeisa, the creation of which, on a large scale prior to 1958, had almost certainly influenced the spread of this species as it also did Ploceine weavers (Clarke 1986). The outward flighting movement in the morning - if any - was not located.

The second movement discerned was undertaken by a few pairs, or small parties not exceeding ten in number, which flighted up the hillside to the north of Hargeisa to feed and possibly roost on open sandy patches near the summits of the hills. This movement took place at dusk with the birds apparently returning next morning, as observation periods from dusk to almost dark failed to reveal any birds moving downwards again, the birds always being left on the ground. On 23 February, the site was visited at 05:55 when half light and during a thick mist. Two birds were flushed, settling again a few metres further on. In view of the half light and heavy mist it seems unlikely - though not impossible - that the birds had just arrived from the safety of the town below; and, coupled with the evening observations, strongly suggest that the birds had in fact roosted there. McLachlan & Liversidge (1978) record the sub-species *phaeonota* and/or *bradfieldi* in South Africa roosting on newly ploughed fields, having taken to more open country where grain is grown. At this site the tallest shrubs were scattered acacias, approximately 3 m high, and most unsuitable for accommodating a large pigeon, together with patches of aloe scrub interspersed with open sandy ground.

This species was also noted roosting in August on a south-facing, split-level, corrugated iron roof; where the upper level overhung the lower so providing overhead shelter, but leaving the pair exposed to the prevailing winds.

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MACKINDER'S EAGLE OWL FEEDING ON BATS

An early morning visit to the Kitum cave on Mt Elgon, Kenya, resulted in a fascinating observation. At approximately 08:30 on 30 August 1983 Glen and Richard Matthews, Craig Sholley and I approached this famed elephant cave. When within about 100 m of the mouth of the cave we sighted a Mackinder's Eagle Owl *Bubo capensis mackinderi* perched on the large boulders at the mouth of the cave. While we stood observing the bird through binoculars, it flew into the cave. We assumed it was seeking shelter for the daylight hours. We proceeded towards and then into the cave. Immediately upon entering the cave, an eagle owl flew out of the cave past us. As the bird passed within a metre or so of us it was easily observed to be carrying a bat, apparently taken in the depths of the cave. We then sought out the point of rock on which it had been resting upon our sighting it.

On top of this rock we found five bat wings, of between 15 and 20 cm in length. Upon examining the cave, we found it to contain a large population of bats of what appeared to be at least two species. We were, however, unable to identify these without closer inspection. These observations suggest diurnal hunting and feeding by the Mackinder's Eagle Owl in the daytime darkness of the cave, preying on the roosting bats.

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ROOSTING BEHAVIOUR OF RED-FACED CROMBEC

One facet of bird behaviour that is very little known is the roosting behaviour of many birds. For example, we have found only one reference to roosting in honeyguides, that being a honeybird juvenile roosting between two foster parents.